

Message from AFJN's Executive Director Dr. Steven Nabieu Rogers



Dear Friends,

The Holy Father's recent visit to Africa offers both a moment of grace and a call to responsibility. His message of peace and respect for human dignity reminds us that Africa's future must be shaped not only by policy, but by values deeply rooted in faith.

This conviction was reaffirmed during my participation in the 2026 Africa Political Outlook in Brussels, where African leaders and policymakers gathered to reflect on the continent's future. On the panel "Forces of Faith: Africa, God, and Us," I emphasized that lasting progress will not come from policy alone, but from the values that guide it. Faith communities remain indispensable in promoting ethical leadership and fostering inclusive, people-centered development.

In this same spirit, I invite you to reflect on my engagement with our European sister network, Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN), on the recent Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) joint statement. At a time of shifting global aid priorities, the bishops of Africa and the United States remind us that development must respect African agency and be grounded in long-term justice.

We are also renewing our engagement with United States (US) policymakers on Africa-related priorities. In collaboration with partners, AFJN submitted a statement to Congress calling for a just and lasting peace rooted in accountability and respect for sovereignty in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). We also look forward to supporting legislative efforts such as the NO BAN Act, which seeks to prevent discriminatory travel bans affecting mostly African nations.

Despite a challenging global financial landscape, AFJN remains steadfast in its mission. Our women's empowerment initiatives in Ghana and Uganda continue to accompany young women entering traditionally male-dominated trades while strengthening community-based farming for sustainable livelihoods.

In this edition, we also mark more than a decade of advocacy against land grabbing in Ghana with our documentary, "When the Land is Gone, So is the Food."

We thank you for your continued prayers and support. God bless.



Donations



Membership

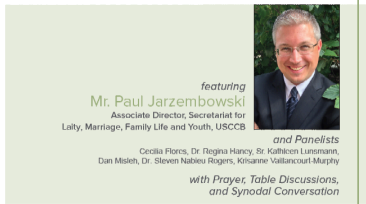


2025 End of Year Report: Activity Highlights and Updates

AFJN's "[2025 End of Year Report: Activity Highlights and Updates](#)" features communities in Africa that are solving issues like: increasing school attendance, stopping early and child marriage and domestic servitude, and food security. Read how the Unity through Diversity program encourages peace in the DRC by engaging hundreds of youth in music and spreading the anthem of peace. These are just a few of the many success stories upholding our mission in 2025.

Leaders on Mission: Building a Culture of Hope

Wednesday, May 6, 2026
9:30 to 3:00
Saint John Paul II Shrine
3900 Harewood Avenue, NE
Washington, DC



Dr. Rogers Panelist for Executive Directors Network (EDN) In-Service Day

May 6, 2026 (EDN Members only)

Dr. Rogers will be speaking at "Leaders on Mission: Building a Culture of Hope" during the [EDN In-Service Day](#). The EDN is a network of leaders of Catholic organizations in the Washington DC area that meet monthly. This event is restricted to staff from EDN participating organizations.



Spring Institutional Briefing

May 2026 (AFJN Organizational Members only)

AFJN will hold a Spring Institutional Briefing for our Organizational Members to dive deeper into the work being done in the US and Africa. Consider becoming an Institutional Member and learn more about member benefits here: <https://afjn.org/members/>.



AFJN Day of Service

June 2026

Last year AFJN started an annual tradition setting aside a day to serve those in the local community. This June you are invited to join us in this [AFJN Day of Service](#). More details will be shared in the coming weeks on our website.



Walk with AFJN for the Camino of Maryland in Support of the Day of the African Child

June 17, 2026 (all welcome)

You are invited to join AFJN for a [ONE-DAY WALK with the Camino of Maryland](#) in support of the "Day of The African Child" at 11:45 am. This 'Camino' or walking pilgrimage is similar to ones like "El Camino de Santiago" or making pilgrimages to the Holy Land or Medjugorje. [Learn more and RSVP here.](#)



AFJN Annual Memorial Mass

August 19, 2026 (all welcome)

This sacred gathering is dedicated to acknowledging and celebrating the profound contributions of our late donors, board members, staff, and supporters whose dedication has shaped AFJN's mission. Your participation enriches this occasion as we unite to honor their legacy and find solace in shared faith. To RSVP please visit <https://afjn.org/2026memorialmass/>.

US Advocacy



25-Year Visions for the Church in Africa



In April AFJN attended the USCCB's "2025-50 Vision for the Church in Africa" presentation by Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior, Secretary General of SECAM. The Secretary laid out the 25-year Plan for the African Church. Dr. Rogers noted the synergy between SECAM's 25-year plan and AFJN's Strategic Business Plan and AFJN looks forward to future collaboration with both SECAM and the USCCB.

AFJN and Over 90 Organizations Send Letter to Secretary Rubio on Critical Minerals, Health in Zambia

On March 26 AFJN joined Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns in the "[Reject Threatening HIV and Other Medical Assistance to Zambia Over Critical Minerals](#)" to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio that was supported by over 90 other organizations. Access to lifesaving medicines should not be used as a tool to prop up trade negotiations.



A Catholic Social Teaching (CST) Perspective on Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) 2026 "Protecting People, Peace, and Planet!"

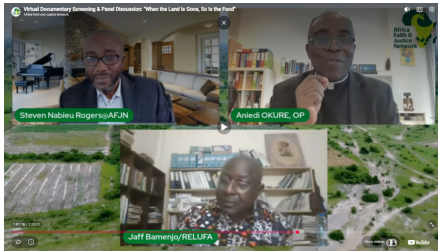
AFJN participated in the 2026 EAD National Gathering in Washington, DC, held April 20-22 under the theme "[Protecting People, Peace, and Planet!](#)" where we brought a Pan-African, Catholic-social-teaching perspective to national conversations on migration, disaster response, and care for creation, and joined in a [collective day of legislative advocacy](#) on Capitol Hill. Read Mr. Jacques Bahati's article "[A Catholic Social Teaching Perspective on Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2026 'Protecting People, Peace, and Planet!'](#)."

AFJN Documentary "When the Land is Gone, So is the Food"

For over a decade AFJN has been raising awareness by educating local communities and key stakeholders on the different tactics used and by sharing stories of the harm caused to future generations, communities are better able to protect themselves from these exploitative long-term-ground leases. AFJN has accompanied local communities as they realize the true value of their land and learn how to hold all parties of the agreements accountable. "When the Land is Gone, So is the Food" is an AFJN documentary that reviews AFJN's work in Ghana and the subsequent efforts of the communities, community leaders, and the youth as they protect their land for future

generations. AFJN held [a special live screening](#) for the premiere of the documentary with Different Perspectives with Paul Ndiho. The event was also listed in [Reconcile](#) and Land Matrix.

[Live-Broadcast Screening with a Panel Discussion Video](#)



["When the Land is Gone, So is the Food" Documentary Video](#)



At Brussels Summit, AFJN Leader Urges Policymakers to Take Faith Seriously in Shaping Africa's Future

In March 2026, Dr. Rogers spoke on the "Forces of Faith: Africa, God, and Us" panel during the 2026 *Africa Political Outlook: Forces of the Future* Convening in Brussels. This major-international gathering on Africa's future challenged global leaders to rethink a force often overlooked in policy circles: faith. The two-day even covered a myriad of topics and offered opportunities to network with other though leaders active in African policy from around the world and was covered in various media outlets. [Watch the panel here.](#)



Addressing Shifting Global Aid and Mission Priorities at AEFJN Meeting

On March 12 [Dr. Rogers gave a presentation](#) on the February 2026 Joint- Statement of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the USCCB and the Justice, Peace and Development Commission of the SECAM letter. Dr. Rogers addressed development collaboration and the implications for AFJN and AEFJN's mission in Africa, Europe, and the US amid shifting geopolitical approaches to international aid.



AFJN Celebrates with FADICA During Their 50th Anniversary - Catholic Philanthropy Network Day of Discernment

On March 12 AFJN attended the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA). The celebration brought together funders, Catholic ministry leaders, bishops, and other special guests to discuss the Church's mission and witness and share best practices and the role of philanthropy. FADICA has been a great resource by connecting AFJN with potential funders and funding strategies.



Congressional Outreach on Peacekeeping in the DRC and Rwanda, Sudan, and South Sudan

In March AFJN Executive Director and Policy Analyst attended "Advancing Peace in DRC and Rwanda through President Trump's Washington Accord" a follow-up hearing of the US House Subcommittee on Africa on the DRC that built on the January 19 session. Afterwards AFJN staff took the opportunity to engage directly with Chairman Chris Smith on key policy concerns that included the: escalating crisis in Sudan; ongoing human rights violations in South Sudan; and reflections on the DRC. Through this engagement,

AFJN aims to influence US policy toward advancing accountable, sustainable peace and protecting vulnerable populations in the DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, and the wider regions.



AFJN Outreach to University Students on Liberation Theology

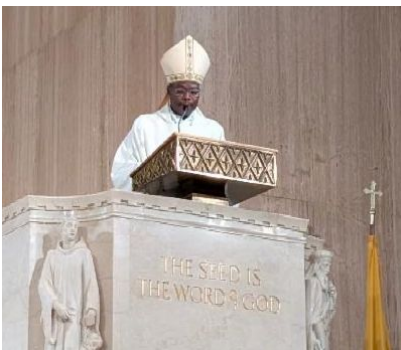
In February, Sr. Eucharica Madueke, SNDdeN AFJN Women Empowerment Coordinator gave an online presentation on Liberation Theology to students at Xavier University. In addition to addressing theology she also addressed the work of AFJN and how the work is informed by CST in the hopes to inspire students to put their faith into action.



Fostering Collaboration with the USCCB

In February, Dr. Rogers and members of EDN met with USCCB leadership, including Rev. Paul B. R. Hartmann and Ms. Mary Pat Donoghue, and discussed: strengthening collaboration, advancing shared mission priorities, fostering synodal listening, and improving communication on policies and initiatives.

Justice for Immigrants



AFJN Supports Africa Immigrants During USCCB SECAM's "Mass for Solidarity with Bishops and Faithful of Africa"

AFJN staff attended the USCCB and SECAM "Mass for Solidarity with Bishops and Faithful of Africa" on February 4 to draw attention to the importance of the relationship between the US and Africa centered around the themes of CST mentioned in the USCCB and SECAM February statement. The Main Celebrant was Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, and Member of the USCCB's Committee on International Justice

and Peace, with Bishop Stephen Dami Mamza of Yola, Nigeria, and 1st Vice President of SECAM, who served as homilist.

AFJN Press Statement on USCCB and SECAM Joint Statement "Brothers and Sisters in Hope"

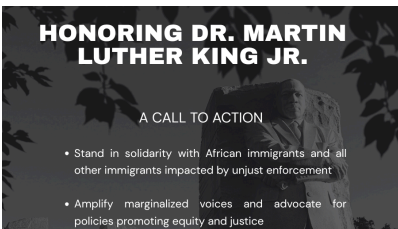
In February the USCCB with SECAM released the joint statement "[Brothers and Sisters in Hope: International Assistance and Mutual Solidarity between the Bishops and the Faithful of the United States and Africa.](#)" AFJN issued a press release around the statement where Dr. Rogers highlighted the key Catholic principles and the values addressed to guide the faithful on how to navigate the current global climate. Read the [AFJN statement here.](#)



Joint Submission for the Record to US Subcommittee on Africa Ahead of Congressional Hearing on the DRC

AFJN in collaboration with DR Congo Forward submitted a [Statement for the Record](#) to the US House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa ahead of its January 22, 2026 hearing on peace in the DRC. The joint submission called for a more just and sustainable approach to peace, emphasizing accountability, respect for Congolese sovereignty, and the need

to address the root causes of the conflict, including resource exploitation and regional interference. Through these types of collaboration, AFJN urges US policymakers to advance a peace framework grounded in justice, civilian protection, and long-term stability.



An AFJN Call to Action on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

On January 19, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Dr. Rogers shared "[Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy: A Call to Action for Africa and Africans in the United States of America.](#)"

AFJN Invited to Closed-Door Briefing on DRC

On January 14, at the Search for Common Ground office, AFJN joined a select group of organizations in a closed-door meeting held under the Chatham House Rules. AFJN contributed key perspectives on priority issues and areas of focus, reaffirming our ongoing commitment to engaging US policymakers in addressing the DRC crisis.

Just Governance

Cameroon



April Report - Children in Ngaoundéré and Yagoua are Gaining Legal Identities

AFJN's "[Cameroon: Birth Registration and Civil Status Regularization](#)" April 2026 report highlights how 300 vulnerable children are in the process of obtaining their legal identity in Ngaoundéré and Yagoua. The report noted that this successful coordinated effort combined community action, legal facilitation, and institutional partnerships. It also highlighted the progress, challenges, and transformative impact of the initiative.



Democratic Republic of the Congo



Caravanning for Peace through Rubare, Rutshuru, and Kiwanja

In March, AFJN and its partners brought the “Unity Through Diversity” initiative to the eastern DRC, with a convening of musicians in Kiwanja and public peace caravans through Rubare, Rutshuru, and Kiwanja. The events drew large community participation and highlighted the growing role of youth and the importance of cultural expression in addressing ethnic divisions and advancing grassroots peacebuilding. Read Mr. Bahati's article "[A Cultural Strategy for Peace in a Region Shaped by Conflict.](#)"



2025 Peacebuilding Through Songs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Country Report

Read the "[2025 Peacebuilding through Songs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)" country report.



Ghana



Land Grabbing Prevention Documentary Premiered

This year AFJN premiered the documentary of our land grabbing prevention work in Ghana during a live broadcast (see above US Advocacy Section).

2025 Country Report on Land Grabbing Prevention in Ghana

Read the "[Land Grabbing Prevention and Community Engagement in Ghana - 2025](#)" country report.



Sierra Leone

Signs of Hope in FG Gold Advocacy

Since AFJN's October 2025 townhall in Valunia Chiefdom, news reports have highlighted FG Gold's meeting with top-level Sierra Leone government officials, where the company reported progress on community initiatives. These include skills training, infrastructure development, and increased local employment - key priorities raised by the community. AFJN is now working with the community to plan a reassessment with the company and government to verify these claims and ensure accountability. Read Dr. Roger's article "[AFJN Highlights Community Commitments Following Government Inspection of Baomahun Gold Project](#)".

Additionally, though the media did not mention AFJN directly, these articles are in response to our townhall meeting and how the community is holding FG Gold accountable to their commitments: Osman Tolo Sesay's "[Government Inspects Baomahun Gold Project as Commercial Production Nears](#)" article in *Sierraloaded*.



2025 Championing Community Rights in Sierra Leone's Gold Mining Sector

Read the 2025 "[Championing Community Rights in Sierra Leone's Gold Mining Sector](#)."

These projects are made possible by funding from the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities and other organizational and individual members.

Women Empowerment Project (WEP)

Safeguarding Training with Praeveni Global

In February Sr. Eucharía and other members of WEP participated in a multi-day safeguarding course led by [Praeveni Global](#). This training covered the different forms of vulnerable populations, challenging the group to change how they view the concepts of safeguarding and vulnerable populations. They identified why it is important to have safeguarding plans in place when serving different and potentially vulnerable populations. Many attendees were enthusiastic to share this knowledge with their communities and create measures to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable populations. AFJN hopes to offer opportunities on safeguarding in the future.

Ghana - WEP



AFJN with AFJN-Ghana Training Girls to Become Electricians - Pilot Project

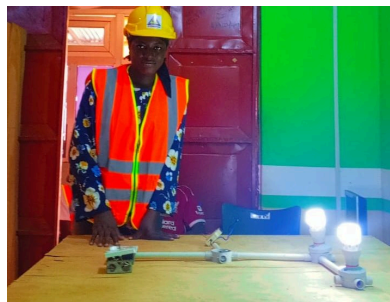


From January to March a small group of select girls passed a three-month training to become electricians through the partnership of AFJN, AFJN-Ghana, and AVERU PAWA Electrical Works as part of the WEP. This efforts helps break stereotypes by showing that girls are just as capable of learning trades as men. These girls are serving as role models for their peers, breaking stereotypes and demonstrating that they can learn new and very relevant skills for their communities.

In February a stakeholders briefing "Empowering Communities and Vulnerable Individuals in Ghana to Work Together Towards Ending Early and Child Marriage and Domestic Servitude" was held in Tamale. The pilot project was used to demonstrate that girls are capable of working in the trades too and they too can provide other economic opportunities for them communities.



On January 16, 2026, AFJN-Ghana published "[AFJN-Ghana Partners with AVERU PAWA Electrical Works to Empower Girls Through Electrical Wiring Training](#)" on their [website](#) about the training.



Sensitizing Junior High School (JHS) Students on the Dangers of Early and Child Marriage and Domestic Servitude

In January AFJN with AFJN-Ghana visited St. Monica's St. Monica Roman Catholic JHS in Nyankpala to do sensitization training on the dangers of early and child marriage and domestic servitude. The meetings were lead by Sr. Ignatia Sr. Ignatia Sarfowaa Buabeng, the National Coordinator of AFJN-Ghana, who emphasized the "dangers, long-term consequences, and

emotional impact of these harmful practices [and valued] education" and self-esteem among the youth.



Read [AFJN-Ghana's article "AFJN Ghana Sensitizes Students of St. Monica R/C JHS on Early Marriage and Domestic Servitude."](#)

AFJN Community Visits Offer Protection from Early and Child Marriage and Domestic Servitude



AFJN's community visitation in March was highly successful, drawing over 600 participants, including chiefs, opinion leaders, and local officials. A key outcome was the formation of a committee to collaborate with chiefs on a by-law protecting young people from early marriage and exploitation. The community openly acknowledged the need for change and expressed gratitude to AFJN for raising awareness. A girls' soccer club was also launched, and despite the heat and large turnout, activities continued as the team prepared to

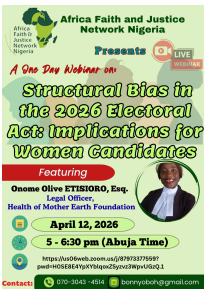
visit another village tomorrow.

AFJN-Ghana Report on 2025 Interventions in the Northern Region



On January 22, 2026, AFJN-Ghana published their "[Empowering Communities to End Child Marriage—One Step at a Time](#)" article that highlighted some of the key finding from by Maxwell Anamdare Asale (MPhil) and Lawrence Adukor Abanga (MSc)'s report "[Interventions on Ending Early and Forced Child Marriages and Domestic Servitude in Selected Communities of the Northern Region Study.](#)"

Nigeria - WEP



Inclusive Leadership Events

Leaders of the WEP realized that Nigeria is lacking sufficient women representation in government. To address this AFJN with AFJN-Nigeria held several workshops and activities, led by the women religious, raising awareness about this disparity. The first was the "[Inclusive Leadership: Women Representation in Nigerian Governance and Development](#)" webinar in March with over 100 women religious in attendance. The women decided there needed to be additional activities including targeted government outreach in

May. In April a "**Structural bias in the 2026 Interventions Electoral Act: Implications for Women Candidates**" webinar was held where the participants decided what action steps they were going to take to sensitize the larger public including the creation of a radio jingle. Finally, on May 4-5 the "**Inclusive Leadership: Women Representation in Nigerian Governance**" advocacy outreach will take place in Abuja where the group will be meeting with key stakeholders and government leaders.

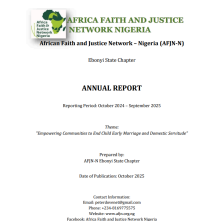


AFJN-Nigeria Strengthens Community Partnership in Ebonyi State



In February, AFJN-Nigeria held a Community Entry Meeting at the palace of HRH Eze Oliva Eze in Ikwo LGA, Ebonyi State. Traditional rulers, village heads, women and youth leaders, religious leaders, and town union executives came together to commit to ending child early and forced marriage and domestic servitude. During the meeting the community signed an MOU, formalizing partnership with AFJN-Nigeria, and establishing a skills-acquisition centre to empower vulnerable

children and families and to reduce poverty-driven exploitation. Together, AFJN with AFJN-N are building community-led solutions to protect children and transform harmful norms.



AFJN-Nigeria Annual Report for 2025

Read AFN-Nigeria Ebonyi State Chapter's 2025 Report "[Empowering Communities to End Child Early Marriage and Domestic Servitude.](#)"

Uganda - WEP



Lokopo Community Farm Yields a Brighter Future

In January the Lokopo community was able to harvest the crops planted from the community-farming initiative where select members of the community were trained in sustainable agriculture. By teaching this normally-nomadic community the new skills of sustainable farming, the hope is to improve food security, encourage productive work within their community, and to eliminate the need to send children away to work to the larger towns and cities where they can be harmed or trafficked.



In March and April the community prepared the fields for the next round of crops. They were able to hire 10 oxen for two days to plough 5 hectares of land where green gram and sunflower was

planted. They then hired a tractor to plough 5 hectares of virgin land (so much harder for oxen to plough) that will grow sorghum. Since tractors are limited bigger farms with more land are given priority.

This project is made possible by grants from the Conrad Hilton Foundation, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Base Communities, and other organizational and individual members.

News

AFJN Research Fellows and Spring Intern



[Ms. Mokuia Makori](#)
AFJN Research Fellow
(2026) and AFJN
Summer Intern (2025)



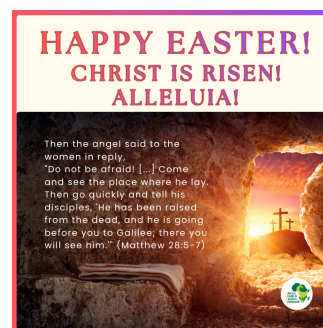
[Mr. Michael Bryant](#)
AFJN Research Fellow
(2025-2026)
Howard University



[Ms. Margaret Asho](#)
AFJN Spring Intern
Fellow (2026)
Indiana University
Bloomington

AFJN is looking for Summer, Fall, and Spring interns. More information can be found on [AFJN's Internship page](#). Learn more about [AFJN's Internship Program and apply online here](#).

Our Faith



Missionary Appeals

In 2026 AFJN will participate in the Missionary Cooperative Plan with the Diocese of Erie (PA) and the Diocese of Arlington (VA). These opportunities allow AFJN to share our mission and the work being done in the US and in Africa. This is a great way to connect with lay Catholics and share how we, as a faith-centered organization, put CST into practice.

Catholic Task Force on Africa (CTFA) Guest Speakers Dr. James Jay Carney and Mr. John Ashworth



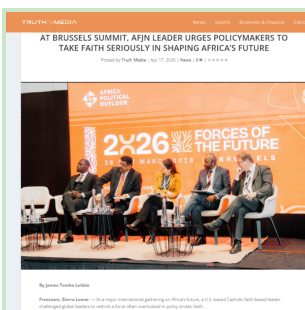
Dr. James Jay Carney
Theology and Africa Studies
Professor, Creighton University



Mr. John Ashworth
Retired Lay-Missionary
Teacher and Advisor to the
Sudan and South Sudan
Catholic Bishops' Conference

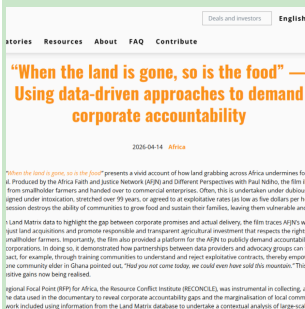
On April 28 CTFA (AFJN is a founding member of CTFA) hosted guest speaker Dr. James Jay Carney, Theology and African Studies Professor from Creighton University, who spoke on "Small Christian Communities and Synodality in Kenya." Earlier this year CTFA hosted special guest speaker Mr. John Ashworth who shared his "Thoughts on the Current Situation in Sudan." Please email lydia@afjn.org or cfta@afjn.org for more information about how you can participate in CTFA.

AFJN in the News



AFJN Dr. Rogers Quoted in *Truth Media*

On April 17, 2026, Dr. Rogers was quoted in James Tamba Lebbie's "At Brussels summit, AFJN leader urges policymakers to take faith seriously in shaping Africa's future" article in *Truth Media*. "Africa's future will not be built by policy alone, it will be built by values," Dr. Rogers. [Read it here.](#)



AFJN Documentary Featured in *Land Matrix Post*

On April 14, 2026, *Land Matrix* featured AFJN's Documentary in their "When the land is gone, so is the food" — Using data-driven approaches to demand corporate accountability" article. [Read it here.](#)



Press Release: AFJN Letter to Pope Leo XIV Ahead of Visit to Africa Highlighting Key Concerns

On April 13, 2026 AFJN issued the "AFJN Letter to Pope Leo XIV Ahead of Visit to Africa Highlighting Key Concerns" press release. The release highlighted country-specific areas of focus and AFJN's continental priorities. [Read it here.](#)



Joint Letter to Secretary of State on Zambia Featured in *Dominican Sisters International*

On March 27, 2026 *Dominican Sisters International's* "Dominican Leadership Conference and 90+ Global Organizations Denounce Use of HIV Aid as Leverage in Zambia Mineral Talks" article featured the joint letter sent to Secretary Rubio. [Read it here.](#)



Joint Letter to Secretary of State on Zambia Featured in *Trade Justice Education Fund*

On March 26, 2026 *Trade Justice Education Fund* "Secretary of State Rubio Urged to Reject Threatening HIV Assistance to Zambia in Critical Minerals Negotiations" published a press release featuring the joint letter to Secretary Rubio. [Read it here.](#)



Article: "Cocoa Farmers, Justice, and the Preferential Option for the Poor"

On March 12, 2026, Mr. Jacques Bahati, AFJN Policy Analyst wrote "Cocoa Farmers, Justice, and the Preferential Option for the Poor". [Read it here.](#)

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